

The following is a brief description of fatal accidents in connection with coal-mining operations during 1916 :—

Date.	Name and Situation of Mine.	Name, Age, and Occupation of Person killed.	Cause of Accident, Nature of Injuries, and Remarks.
12 Jan. ..	Big River Coal-mine, near Reefton	George William Scott (32), miner	His skull was fractured by a fall of coal and stone from the roof while he was picking down soft loose coal in a place that was very well timbered, but from which he had unwisely removed the top laths to facilitate getting the coal. Falls occurred when he was underneath the unprotected coal.
13 Jan. ..	Millerton Colliery, Millerton	Joseph Robinson (44), miner	His skull was fractured by a piece of coal weighing about 2 cwt. or 3 cwt. falling upon him while he was trimming down loose coal after a shot had been fired. In trying to escape he slipped and fell, the coal falling upon him. The coal was hard, and the place well supported by props. This appears to be an accident of the unpreventable class.
8 Mar. ..	Blackball Colliery, Blackball	Albert Grindle (30), miner	He and his brother were winning 4 ft. of top coal overlying timber-sets in a bord about 18 ft. wide. A timber-set swung and carried with it the two adjacent sets, spaced approximately 3 ft. apart. The coal and roof-clay fell, immediately burying deceased and crushing him to death. There was no evidence to indicate what caused the timber to collapse, but it is surmised that it was loosened by blasting; it was properly erected in the opinion of deceased's brother and the colliery officials. Immediately before the accident deceased had warned his brother that if he heard any noise from the roof or timber to get back quick; he then said, "Listen! get back quick"; they both jumped away, but too late to save themselves from being buried; the brother was not seriously hurt.
13 Sept. ..	Blackball Colliery, Blackball	John William Hartman (47), miner	He and his mate were working in a bord widening a face from 16 ft. to 18 ft. The bord was excellently timbered with sets, but the rib being widened was overhanging and had no sprag. He was standing between the timber and the rib-side when a fall of about 10 cwt. of coal occurred without warning, striking him on the head, causing his death two days later. After the fall a well-defined "sooty back" was exposed. About two hours and a half before the accident a deputy had examined the place and considered it safe. This fatality would not have occurred if the overhanging coal had been properly spragged. No reliance can be placed on so-called "arching" of top coal when the roof is of claystone or sandstone as at the West Coast collieries; bituminous coal is most treacherous. The usual blame is attached to "sooty" and other "backs," when it should be placed on those responsible for adequate support of the coal.
17 Nov. ..	Denniston Colliery, Denniston	Hugh Holmes (70), foreman at screens	While crossing one of the railway-wagon lines under the coal-storage bins in the afternoon, presumably on his way to the mine office with the time-book, he was knocked down and run over by an approaching wagon, his thighs being broken; he subsequently stated that he saw the wagon approaching. He died from shock the same evening. No blame appears to be attachable to any one; the deceased, owing to his age, was not active, and misjudged his ability to avoid the wagon.
4 Dec. ..	Brunner Colliery, Brunner	Edward Dando (41), miner	John Hart, a shiftman, was putting up a new bar to supplement another that gave signs of breaking, in a level at the corner of a pillar which was being extracted. At about noon deceased, who was working at his place about 20 yards away, came to Hart, and with a deputy rendered assistance by steadying the props while the bar was being wedged to the roof; without warning a large splintered stone, which had been held up by a lath, fell from the roof on to deceased, causing internal injuries from which he died that night. The shiftman and the examining deputy stated at the inquest that there was no indication of danger prior to the fall. The Inspector of Mines had found during recent inspections the locality to be well timbered. The splintering and fall of rock was probably due to "bumping" of the roof as a result of the pillar-extraction.